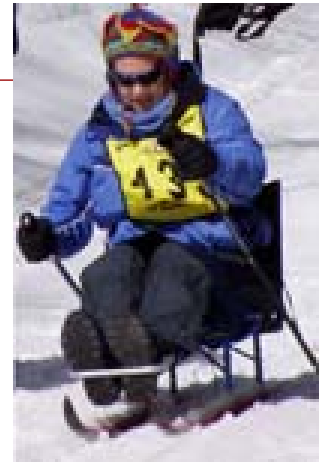




National Disabled Veterans

# Winter Sports Clinic



## Skier Profile

### Jeanné Sanitate – *Our Lady of Perpetual Motion*

Jeanné Sanitate, a 52-year-old Air Force veteran from Medford, N.J., is a woman in constant motion. Despite being sidelined from a service-incurred incomplete fracture of the spinal cord as well as multiple sclerosis, she decided to get involved in sports again after hearing about the National Disabled Winter Sports Clinic.

Being extremely patriotic from an early age, Sanitate joined the New Jersey Air National Guard and served as an optometry technician and medic from 1976-77. In 1977, she decided to move her service to active duty status in the Air Force, serving a tour in Germany and another in England.

Sanitate's Air Force career ended when she sustained a spinal cord fracture while on duty. Luckily, she was athletic. She ran six miles each day, went on bike hikes with friends and played a lot of tennis – in 1981 she was ranked third in England for the Air Force team and second at Moody Air Force Base two years later. Her desire for physical fitness, coupled with the intensive physical therapy she received, helped Sanitate regain the ability to walk. Toward the end of her tour though, her right leg started to fail at times and she was discharged in December 1984.

After hearing about the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in 2005, Sanitate made the decision to get active in sports again. Although she was too late in registering to attend the 2006 Winter Sports Clinic, she did participate in the 2006 National Veterans Wheelchair Games. At that event, she rolled away with three gold and one bronze medal in her events. "I was so jazzed to play softball again," said Sanitate. "I was the only female on the team. It was nice to gain acceptance from my male teammates after my three runs batted in."

In 2007, Sanitate attended the Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass Village, Colorado, where she learned downhill and cross country skiing, and also took part in the biathlon and curling events. In wheelchair curling, she teamed up with two other women participants. "We took on the guys and beat them," she says proudly. "I realized there were sports I could do even though I was in a wheelchair. What a high I was on from that!"

Since participating in these events, Sanitate has become more active helping other veterans, getting involved with fundraising for the Wheelchair Games and also being certified as a county service officer with the Disabled American Veterans so she can assist other veterans with their benefit claims. She has testified on behalf of veterans at the state assembly, met with legislators to increase awareness about veterans preference legislation, and has recently applied for a position on the Women Veterans Council to the New Jersey Governor. "I would really like to get the position to help my fellow female veterans in New Jersey as well as our male comrades," said Sanitate. "I do have to remember to pace myself so I don't put myself into a relapse!" This might be the most daunting task of all for someone who remains in perpetual motion.

